

SOME MEMORIES OF JOHN DEWEY

1859-1952

SIDNEY HOOK

JOHN DEWEY is dead. The warm husky voice through which spoke the liberal conscience of America is silent. He leaves behind him no monument in stone, no empire, fortune, or foundation. Yet his bequest is immense and imponderable. The experience of millions of American children is richer and happier for his having lived. And to every adult mind he has offered a reasoned and reasonable faith by which to live.

John Dewey entered the world at the height of the Victorian era. He left it when many fear the beginning of a new dark age. Yet in the long years I knew him, he never lost nerve, never became hysterical over real or fancied dangers. He had seen mankind face and cross too many "crossroads" to be disturbed by another. He was much less optimistic in his talk than in his writing. "Genuine progress," he once said, "comes hard and is uncertain; but it is at least possible." Up until the last year or two of his illness, whenever we met, it was in the spirit of "Well, what's next on the agenda?" There was always a project for some committee, an article or book to be talked over, a problem to be thought out, a reply composed to the perennial critics, an open letter or petition drafted.

From his own life Dewey had learned that the worst things which happen to us are the

things we can't worry about, the unexpected and unprepared for, like the death of two of his young children whom he mourned with a deep, and almost womanly, intensity that was hardly affected by the passage of years. He seemed to believe that what we worry about we usually can do something about, if by worry we mean not a neurotic anxiety but patient reflection. For example, he urged us in 1942 to worry about the Soviet Union's postwar activities when Stalin was being uncritically glorified in the West.

John Dewey's ideas and his personality were inseparable. But at the present moment it is as a human being that I want to write about him, not as a philosopher. There was something rather paradoxical about his personality. He was naturally shy, reticent, and undemonstrative in manner, but he had a great appreciation of vitality in people. So long as it did not express itself in cruelty, he admired passion, enthusiasm, color, and originality in others. He preferred the openness, sincerity, and gusto of the Italian temperament to the cold, exaggerated courtesy of the French which he used to say often cloaked egoistic insularity and profound unconcern towards others. Not that it made any difference in his own attitude towards individuals. I have never known anybody so free of racial or national snobbery. He once told me that he thought *COMMENTARY* was the best magazine in the country. I asked him if he didn't think it contained too many articles on Jewish themes in terms of his own taste and preoccupations. "No," he said, "not if they have the same quality as those of more general interest." He never was satisfied with any explanation of the intense concern of a relatively disproportionate number of Jews with intellectual matters, which, of course, he admired. Religion, including the Jewish

"THESE words were written far from New York under the spell of the news about John Dewey's death," writes SIDNEY HOOK, recognized as one of the foremost interpreters and continuators of Dewey's philosophy, and an intimate friend. Dr. Dewey died on June 1, 1952; he would have celebrated his ninety-third birthday this October. Dr. Hook is chairman of the philosophy department of New York University, and the author, among other works, of *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait*.

religion, left him cold. Perhaps his own upbringing had something to do with this; it was intensely pietistic, especially on his mother's side.

IN A rare, reminiscent mood, he once recounted something of his religious development, and some embarrassing episodes when he was a boy. His mother was the religious member of the family, his father the quizzical and humorous one. "My mother was converted to Evangelism which in practice was something worse than Puritanism. She was continuously asking me and my brother—sometimes before others—'Are you right with Jesus? Have you prayed to God for forgiveness?' It tended to induce in us a sense of guilt and at the same time irritation because of the triviality of the occasions on which she questioned us.

"I recall being told that my mother was converted to Evangelism while visiting a cousin in another city in which her father happened to be residing at the time. My grandfather's family belonged to the Universalist persuasion and my mother, originally, too. On this visit, however, she spent a great deal of time with an Evangelical friend. And my grandfather wrote warning our immediate family that unless someone took things in hand, my mother who arrived as a Universalist would return as a Partialist. She did." (A Partialist was one who did not believe that everyone could be saved.)

Dewey's feeling about religious existentialism, including the Niebuhrian variety, was that it was "the same old stuff." He didn't think it would appeal to anybody who had actually lived through, and outgrown, traditional religious experience. Like the Freudians, the existentialists saw things that were true but instead of explaining them, Dewey complained, they made mysteries of them. Referring to Niebuhr's ideas he once said: "A man doesn't *have* to be an s.o.b. S.o.b.'s are made, not born." He was more sympathetic to Heidegger whom he knew only from secondary accounts. After listening to a report on Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* when I returned from Germany in 1929, he re-

marked: "It sounds like a description of 'the situation' [one of Dewey's central concepts] in transcendental German."

Secular Jewish life interested Dewey very much and he was impressed by some of the leaders of the Jewish labor movement in New York, particularly Charney Vladeck, Abe Cahan, Dubinsky, J. B. S. Hardman, and others, whom he met in the series of movements to organize a third party. "When they think about specific problems, their minds are wonderfully fluid and they exemplify the pragmatic method in action." Distrustful of oratory, he nonetheless liked the mixture of sense, sentiment, and eloquence in their speeches. Old-line Social Democracy with its fixed and rigid categories he thought was a species of metaphysics. The only time he seemed to be baffled by Jews was in 1940. He told me that, try as he might, he could not understand how Jewish Communists could support the Nazi-Soviet pact, whose spirit, if not letter, spelled their liquidation. And by that time, in virtue of his experience in Mexico, Dewey was something of an expert on the Communist movement and the varieties of its motivations. But the spectacle of self-immolating fanaticism remained puzzling to him.

DEWHEY was not a scintillating conversationalist. Most people think as they speak and are not always sure of their thought until they have finished their sentences. Dewey always seemed to think *before* he spoke, so that sometimes there would be long gaps between comment and reply. If one chattered on in hopes of striking a quicker vein of response on some other theme, Dewey would smile at the strategy but always return to the original point. He was not distracted easily.

If shrewdness is an awareness of how personal interest can exploit possibilities, then few people realized how shrewd a Yankee Dewey was. He knew when he was being buttered up, he knew how self-interest concealed itself behind public interest, he knew what people were generally after, sometimes when they were not conscious of it them-

selves. Nonetheless there was a simplicity and trustfulness about him, almost a calculated naivety in his relations with people whose ulterior motives were rather transparent. It was as if he were aware of the many ways a person could deceive or disappoint him and yet made that person feel he had perfect confidence in him. He bet on people and was rarely let down. Perhaps this is a testimony to John Dewey, rather than to the method of implicit and excessive confidence in the goodness and capacity of others.

Dewey encouraged and over-encouraged many who showed a glint of promise. Whatever the quality of their work, they achieved more because of his apparent faith in them. This was no pedagogic device, however. It goes back to his awareness of possibilities in things and to a memory of how he got his own start in philosophy. Before going on to do graduate work at Johns Hopkins, Dewey sent a philosophical essay he had written to Harris, the editor of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. "Harris wrote me," he recalled as his eyes lit up with an amused twinkle, "that my first effort in philosophy was a gem of the purest water. That had a great influence in my decision to go into philosophy."

Dewey never gossiped, and although with the exuberance of youth I used to press him hard on men and events he had known intimately, except once or twice he never gave way. He confessed to some intellectual disappointment with the department of philosophy at Columbia University and he told me several times that he was sorry he had let Coss and Woodbridge run its affairs. But he would go out of his way to praise the work of individual members of the department whenever he could find an occasion.

JOHN DEWEY was not a saint: and he was always suspicious of terms like "saintliness" and "spirituality." There were people he disliked but in his dealings with them he was fair to a fault. There were three people whom he particularly disliked. There may have been others but these are the only ones I can recall in the last twenty-five years. One

was the editor of a series of books whose whole project depended upon Dewey's favor. Dewey was repelled by the fawning way he signed his letters and the unctuous air of humbleness with which he reacted every time Dewey attempted to withdraw from what was a reluctant, tentative commitment. "Only a cruel person, a bully towards those who are weaker, writes and acts like that." But since the man pleaded that his whole career depended upon Dewey's consent, he yielded, much to his later regret.

Mortimer Adler was another person Dewey disliked. But not for the reasons given by *Time* magazine in its cover-story on Adler. According to that story, Adler, then a student at Columbia, read a paper on God and psychology rather critical of Dewey. In the midst of it, Dewey is supposed, red-faced and angry, to have jumped to his feet, shouted, "No one is going to tell me how to love God," and rushed from the room. Dewey was also said to have kept Adler from getting a job at Columbia and was pictured as begging Adler to desist from writing him devastating letters refuting his philosophy. Underneath a picture of Dewey, *Time* printed the rhetorical question: "Worse than Hitler?" derived from Adler's essay on "God and the Professors" in 1939. Dewey's life was approaching its end when the story in *Time* appeared. Although he was immune to criticism of that sort, I am glad he never saw it.

This portrait of Dewey as feuding with and persecuting a student could not be anything but wildly absurd to everyone who knew Dewey. Dewey disliked Adler's exhibitionism and what he believed was a lack of serious respect for truth about fact. He never gainsaid his dialectical talents, but thought that in his relation to others he was too much like a pushy young college debater in training, ready to refute what others said no matter what they believed, and even before they had spoken. No one ever heard Dewey shout at a philosophy meeting or any other meeting, and the truth about the meeting in question is that Dewey, as was his wont, asked only one mild question: whether God was

essence or existence, to which Adler made a garrulous but not clear reply. Dewey had nothing to do with appointments at Columbia, and even if Adler had been an enthusiastic follower of Dewey's there is every indication that J. J. Coss would have kept him out of the department on personal grounds, as he did others. But it is characteristic that despite his dislike of Adler's manner, Dewey went out of his way to write a highly complimentary review of Adler's first book on *Dialectic*; I was taken aback because I was getting ready to publish a blockbuster on Adler. Dewey smiled when he read my manuscript (most of which I incorporated in an article on "What Is Dialectic?"), agreed that my criticisms were valid, but suggested that I had overlooked some good things in Adler and that he would learn and grow. Adler did grow. From believing that all positions were equally valid, an extreme voluntarist doctrine, he developed a view whose logical corollary could easily take the form of a justification of the death sentence for heresy in theology and philosophy. Indeed, he once defended this thesis in a lecture at Cooper Union, though subsequently he maintained that he had spoken in a semi-humorous vein. But in no way humorous was his call for the purging from American educational institutions of all positivists, pragmatists, and naturalists as more of a threat to American democracy than Hitler—and presumably Stalin. But I learned from Dewey the danger of passing final judgments about human beings, their interests, capacities, and characters so long as they were still alive. For all his illuminating discussion about habit, his approach to particular individuals seemed to assume that they were endowed with an indefinite plasticity. He once wryly observed that he had seen strange somersaults in this world. Fond as he was of Max Eastman, he was rather distressed when Eastman swung to an extreme defense of *laissez-faire* in economics. Lowering his voice as if he feared it would hurt Max's feelings, who was a thousand miles distant at the time, he said, "It really isn't necessary to go so far to atone for a too generous enthusiasm."

THE man whom Dewey personally disliked most was someone he knew I admired greatly though I never shared his philosophy except for a few months as a young student. That man was Bertrand Russell. Russell professed a deep esteem for Dewey but delighted in saying the most malicious things about him. In print he never lost an opportunity to make exaggerated criticisms of Dewey's thought, sometimes of a contradictory character. No matter how often misunderstandings would be pointed out to him, he would return to them, ending up with the implication that any view such as Bacon's which regarded knowledge as a form of power, or Marx's that the function of philosophy was not only to interpret the world but also to change it, or Dewey's that every viable theory functioned as an instrument to reconstruct a situation, represented a kind of cosmic fascism. But what riled Dewey was not Russell's criticisms but his frequent descriptions of Dewey's variety of pragmatism, which Dewey—and occasionally even Russell himself—considered to be an extension of the ethics and logic of scientific inquiry, as a form of vulgar commercialism. "I shall never forgive Bertrand Russell," he said with uncustomary firmness, "for the persistence with which he has repeated his derogatory remarks about pragmatism as a form of commercialism. He knows better."

The whole story cannot be told here, but Dewey's feelings about Russell began in China when Russell insisted upon calling on the Christian missionaries with, at the time, his unwed secretary then in an advanced state of pregnancy, in order to broaden their cultural horizon. What concerned Dewey was Russell's insensitiveness to other people's feelings. He believed that there was a streak of cruelty in Russell and an aristocratic disdain for the sensibilities of other human beings outside of his class. Russell's animus against Dewey followed his awareness of Dewey's coldness.

Nonetheless Dewey threw himself into the struggle for the defense of Russell at the time of the disgraceful incident at City College, in which a timorous mayor yielded to

the fantastic charge that because of Russell's views on marriage and divorce, he would corrupt the morals of a daughter of a Brooklyn housewife if he taught mathematical logic to the all-boys' upper division of City College in Manhattan. He also grasped the issue by its nettles and wrote an exposition of Russell's doctrines on love, marriage, and divorce to show that, right or wrong, they could not be characterized as "obscene" or "immoral" and that their assertion was no "damnable felony," as Judge McGeehan held. After Russell was barred, Dewey induced Alfred Barnes to give Russell a professorship at the Barnes Foundation. Russell was surprised and touched by Dewey's activity in his behalf. But his career at the Barnes Foundation ended in a fiasco—so in the end he remained unmollified and, if anything, more caustic against Dewey than ever.

Dewey was puzzled by my constant championship of Russell, and my failure to take public issue with the perfectly outrageous things Russell was saying and writing about pragmatism which I, mistakenly I now believe, dismissed as inconsequential. In a conversation I once said, "Oh, of course, Russell is irresponsible." Dewey stopped me and in earnest tones replied, "Sidney, that's a pretty serious thing to say about anyone." I still believe that Russell was and is a fundamentally irresponsible person, even as a thinker, but I couldn't communicate properly to Dewey my feeling that it was not the whole story considering Russell's great courage, his fresh and effervescent mind, his penetrating insights and remarkable conversational gifts, and the sense of *bonhomie* he injected into any group almost in the way in which a gay, old, and witty reprobate becomes the life of the party. Dewey never actually said that fun and philosophy didn't mix but he felt that there were some contexts in which a joke or a wisecrack was a rude evasion of the issue.

DEWEY used to say that those who had no respect for his philosophy praised his character but that he himself thought more could be said for his philosophy than for his

character. Yet his critics were not wrong about his character even though they did less than justice to his philosophy. Dewey's goodness was so genuine, constant, and sustained, even under provocation, that I sometimes found it somewhat oppressive. I confess I used to keep a specially sharp lookout for anything mean or petty in word and action so that I could grasp him by the small side, so to speak, by which we reduce men of greatness to our own dimension and make it possible to live easily with them. It was almost with relief that I discovered a serious shortcoming in him. That was his indulgent friendship for Albert C. Barnes.

Barnes was a man of considerable gifts as a critic of painting but arbitrary, brutal, and vindictive in his personal relationships. He used his money, and even his museum, as a means of lording it over people more decent than himself. His temper knew no restraint. I recall one evening at his museum in the presence of Dewey, Bullitt, and some other people whom he hardly knew, when he publicly humiliated a close member of his family in unbridled language because she hadn't procured the right kind of glasses for one of the drinks. Barnes made a profession of complete devotion to the principles of Dewey's philosophy, especially his philosophy of democracy. But there never was a man more undemocratic in his personal way of life, which for Dewey was the essence of democracy.

Although I myself had few dealings with Barnes, I would hear about his exploits from individuals who worked for him and from friends to whom he not only denied access to his tax-exempt museum but insulted to boot. Dewey would often be appealed to when Barnes committed an act of injustice grosser than usual, and he was the only person who had any influence over him, even if it merely meant softening Barnes' unjustified rage against an innocent victim.

At different times I would challenge Dewey on why he put up with Barnes. Dewey would explain Barnes as a man with an inferiority complex—he had originally been

a pugilist—and claimed that since he was the only person who could talk back to Barnes and exercise any restraint on him, it wouldn't improve Barnes to break off with him. In addition, he confessed that he found his company interesting especially when he talked about pictures, and that he owed him an intellectual debt. I could not see, however, that Dewey achieved much with Barnes. Every time Barnes got into a scrape as a result of browbeating, insulting, or cheating someone, he tried to drag Dewey into it. He was exploiting Dewey and Dewey didn't seem to care.

When Barnes fired Russell I became, to Barnes' great fury, a partisan of Russell's in the controversy, and helped arrange for Russell a series of lectures at the Rand School, since at the time he had no other source of income. Barnes never forgave me and sought to pay me back. As I learned subsequently, he sent the sister of his secretary to sit in on a course of mine in contemporary philosophy at the New School on an evening when I was lecturing on Bertrand Russell. At the close she kept pressing me to discuss the Russell-Barnes episode, which I dismissed as of no philosophical importance. She turned over her notes to Barnes who apparently edited them and sent them to Dewey with a letter denouncing me for having "betrayed" Dewey. According to the notes I had said that Russell was the most eminent philosopher of his time. What I had actually said was that Russell was the most eminent philosopher of mathematics and writer of philosophic prose of our time.

Even at that, Dewey was amused rather than repelled by Barnes' conduct. What was more surprising, he told me that although Barnes had no legal case against Russell in his summary dismissal, he had a moral case because Russell had promised, in return for an extra two thousand dollars, to do no outside institutional lecturing. I knew that Russell was always greedy when it came to money (it was for a few dollars more that he threw up his most congenial post at UCLA, to go to City College and disaster)

and it was during this time that he was writing on any subject he would be paid for, like his piece on "What to Do When You Are in Love with a Married Man" for *Glamour* magazine. The only evidence Dewey had that Russell made such a promise was Barnes' word. Russell denied it and, so far as I know, Russell has never lied in his own behalf. Barnes in the meantime was telling all and sundry that he had fired Russell with Dewey's knowledge and advice! Dewey's indulgence towards Barnes in this and similar situations is the only time in the twenty-five years I knew him that I felt his behavior to be ambiguous. But I must confess that I was a little glad to see this human weakness in him along with those occasional slight unsaintlike traces of irritation with those who wanted to integrate *his* insights into other philosophical systems instead of integrating others' insights into the basic Deweyan position.

ALTHOUGH Dewey was always fearful of hurting others, in which he was markedly different from Russell, who could be ruthless, he knew no fear for himself—either physical or moral. This was demonstrated at the time he decided to go to Mexico as head of the Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow Trials. The whole story is complicated and this is not the place to tell it. Scarcely anyone knows the intensity and variety of the pressures he had to withstand, not least from the members of his immediate family, some of whom feared he might be killed in the excitable, political milieu of Mexico City. I have been held responsible for his going to Mexico. But although Dewey asked my advice, I never urged him to accept the invitation. Nor did the histrionic appeal by one of the Trotskyist leaders—who, incidentally, later viciously attacked Dewey when he criticized both Trotskyism and Stalinism—influence his decision. The simple truth of the matter is that Dewey made up his mind irrevocably only after he became aware of the efforts and far-flung stratagems of the Communist party to prevent him from going.

These efforts included separate visits from a half-dozen friends to warn him against my presumed influence, which actually had been limited to my soliciting his signature for the organization of the committee to discover the truth about the Moscow Trials. The stratagems included an offer of a bribe, in the form of a "junket tour" first-class to the Soviet Union to revisit the schools. It was made by R., a singer of minor talent, who was very active in the cultural periphery of the Communist party and later identified as a member of the GPU. I can still hear his lilting voice in its foreign English replying to Dewey's explanation that he couldn't go on the tour because he was planning to leave for Mexico to conduct hearings on the Trotsky case: "Trot-sky! Stal-in! We're not interested in such matters, dear Professor Dewey. Ten years ago you came and saw the schools of the Soviet Union: now it is time to come and give another look. VOKS doesn't care about Trotsky or Stalin. It cares only that you should come—and soon. This month or next. First-class accommodations all the way and back."

John Dewey had always been a problem for the Communist party—from the time it became aware of the importance of working among American intellectuals and particularly during the days of the Popular Front. It realized that it could not capture the liberal movement unless it had John Dewey in tow. So long as he stayed out of its chief fronts or was critical, the hegemony of the Communist party over large sections of American liberal opinion was incomplete or threatened. Until this time, he had not taken a hostile position to the Soviet Union and was one of the earliest public figures to call for its recognition. If it could succeed in duping Dewey (as it later did Franz Boas for whom Roosevelt was a "warmonger" in 1940), there was hardly anything it could not successfully initiate in the United States. As far back as 1932 when Browder was wooing me ardently, though worried about my epistemological deviations, I once asked him why he was taking so much time to win me over and running the risk of trouble with

Foster, who was not really reconciled to Stalin's giving the reins of power to Browder, and with Sam Don, a Gletkin type of party functionary who had just come from the Lenin school, philosophically illiterate but full of orthodox zeal. "You are a much more important man than you think," replied Browder. Later on I realized he wasn't thinking of me but of Dewey. I was important primarily as the presumed bridge to Dewey.

The news that Dewey was going to Mexico threw the top ranks of the Communist party into panic. It also disturbed the Kremlin, for the United States was the only country in which the Moscow Trials had met with critical opposition, and Stalin never underestimated Trotsky's intelligence and oratorical talents. He probably feared the kind of testimony Trotsky would give. There is some evidence that another Moscow trial was being planned in which Robinson, a minor agent in the GPU, and Rubens, his American wife, would try to implicate Dewey in order to discredit his Commission's report. Meantime the American Communist party, having failed to capture Dewey or to call him off by weight of visits and delegations, decided to destroy him intellectually. They circulated the legend that Dewey, who was approaching eighty, was senile, that, having lost all capacity for coherent discourse, he signed things blindly without reading them. Dewey dealt this legend a fatal blow by publishing in the same year as the Commission's report his monumental *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. From that time on the only epithet left to the Communist party in attacking Dewey, except during the period of the Nazi-Soviet pact, was "fascist."

DEWEY was a man of no pride—no pride of dress, literary style, social origins, or intellectual achievement. He was prepared to learn from anyone. He rarely kept copies of his voluminous correspondence, and then not for long. He always thought of his philosophy as unfinished even when he became aware of its systematic character. He was a

keen dialectician, and his criticisms were perhaps more dialectical than his philosophy gives him a right to be. But he took no joy in argument as such and was always interested in a man's vision or in a problem.

Dewey always used to say that his intelligence was too abstract—but what he meant by that was that he had difficulty in thinking of concrete dramatic illustrations to drive home general principles. His writing often suffers from this lack of concreteness and he was exaggeratedly grateful for *concrete* suggestions. But what stands out most vividly in my mind about Dewey's intellectual habits is the freshness of his thinking, the variety of starts he would make, and his own sense of the adventure of thinking. He never seemed to be moving towards a preconceived solution. And although many of his new starts ended in nothing but new ways of saying what he had said before, it always came as something of a surprise to him that this should be so. But his whole career showed evidences of change of intellectual emphasis and sometimes of position. Two months after his ninetieth birthday had been celebrated he remarked to me: "Only in the last two years have I come to see the real drift and hang of the various positions I have taken."

This explains in part why Dewey never felt bound by earlier formulations of his position and why he never felt responsible for those who had fixedly accepted those formulations or conclusions and applied them without reference to the corrective process of experiment itself. He was sympathetic to the many progressive educators who invoked his name for the things they were doing, particularly because of the ferocity of the attack on them by reactionaries. But he never intellectually approved of the enthusiasts and faddists, "the Deweyites of progressive education," precisely because, as he once put it, they weren't experimental enough, that is, they didn't learn from the outcome of their own experiments but clung to some of the fetishistic catchwords and practices that once were presented hypothetically. He always kept saying that progres-

sive education was the most difficult kind of education to introduce properly. His conception of progressive education was not incompatible with curricular prescriptions—subject matter which every student, particularly at the college level, should be expected to learn—provided motivation and interest had been properly aroused. Although in the beginning he was dubious about the wisdom of excluding members of the Communist party from teaching in colleges, when he examined the documentation of their commitment and behavior he agreed that they were *prima facie* unemployable. But he characteristically insisted that this should not be a blind rule. There might be exceptions.

MORRIS R. COHEN once vigorously complained to me about my article-review of his *Reasons and Nature*. I had thought I was generous, and perhaps more. To defend myself I told him Dewey had remarked that until reading my article he had not known that Cohen had a philosophy but had always considered him a man very learned in the history of other people's opinions about philosophical problems. Cohen admitted there was something in what Dewey said, but retorted: "And the trouble with Dewey is that *he* discusses philosophical problems as if no one had ever discussed them before." There was some truth in this, though more to Dewey's credit than to his discredit. Thoroughly grounded in the history of ideas, he never substituted history for analysis.

Cohen was one of those who had a great admiration for Dewey's character and almost none for his philosophy. But I never was convinced that Cohen had read Dewey sympathetically or tried to think through the kind of problems Dewey was interested in. Those who took their undergraduate work with Cohen were not likely to be sympathetic to Dewey in the light of Cohen's exposition and criticism unless they continued in the field. Although Cohen boasted that he neither had nor wished to have disciples, he was quite piqued when any of his students

abandoned his ambiguous rationalism for the experimental naturalism of Peirce and Dewey.

Temperamentally I have always found Russell and Cohen more congenial than Dewey. They are philosophers of the clean line, incisive, witty, rarely hesitant about sacrificing the dull or exact truth for the sake of a *bon mot*. But I came to see that Cohen had little original vision and that he was primarily an excellent judicial critic rather than an interpretive one. When Cohen got through criticizing almost any great contemporary thinker, one asked oneself: how could any philosopher be such an ass as to believe such stuff? The truth was that most of the time he didn't. Russell has many visions but in the end they do not seem to add up to a vision of the actual world with its genuine possibilities for good or evil, as it is lived and experienced. The world is too thick for him and because it has no one pattern, he has long since given it up as a higgledy-piggledy mess. Emotionally, he has remained a Platonist *malgré lui*, an alien from the pure world of mathematics but still not at home in the historical world.

PERHAPS the secret of Dewey's personality is that there is no secret. There were no hidden ambitions, no vain regrets, no sense of being anything more than a citizen, a neighbor, a teacher, a friend—and a philosopher. He was a good man—sometimes too good in the sense that he would let his kindness influence his intellectual decisions.

I worked closely with him on the manuscript of his *A Common Faith*. It is a thoroughly naturalistic approach to religion. The only thing I disagreed with was his use of the term "God" for faith in the validity of moral ideals. Dewey's God is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; nor of

Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas, nor of Spinoza, Kant, or Hegel; nor of James or Schiller. Why then use it, I asked. He argued that the term had no unequivocal meaning in the history of thought; that there was no danger of its being misunderstood (in which he was shortly proved wrong); and that there was no reason why its emotive associations of the sacred, profound, and ultimate should be surrendered to the supernaturalist, especially since for him not religion but the religious experience is central. All this seemed to me to be legitimate if not sufficient grounds. But then he added something which men like Russell or Cohen would never have dreamed of saying: "Besides there are so many people who would feel bewildered if not hurt were they denied the intellectual right to use the term 'God.' They are not in the churches, they believe what I believe, they would feel a loss if they could not speak of God. Why then shouldn't I use the term?"

As far as his ideas are concerned, I am not sure that I have always understood Dewey, but the more I reflect the more confident I am that he is right in general outline and wrong in many details. After he had once expressed what seemed to me more than a conventional appreciation of something I had written, I turned to him and asked what he really saw in my stuff, since I felt I was merely developing ideas I had learned from him. An unfriendly critic had even referred to me as "Dewey's bulldog." I treasure his remark more than the many accolades he has written me, particularly since I have sometimes been charged with reading my own views into Dewey and Dewey's views into Marx. "No, Sidney," was his gentle response, "it's more than that. When I read you, I understand myself better." Spoken as only John Dewey would.